

## ACSI QUARTERLY MEETING

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 2/28/24, 1PM-3PM
	Remote access only
<b>Next Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 5/8/24, 1PM-3PM

## ACSI MEMBERS PRESENT

- **Amanda Zuniga, Energy Trust of Oregon**
- **Dr. Derron Coles, The Blueprint Foundation**
- **Elaine Hart, Moment Energy Insights**
- **Jona Davis, Portland NAACP Environmental Justice Committee**
- **Juliáe Riva, Portland General Electric**
- **Lukas Angus, 7 Waters Canoe Family, and member of the Nez Perce tribe (Nimiipuu)**
- **Mara Gross, Page Two Partners**
- **Noelle Studer-Spevak, Families for Climate**
- **Samantha Hernandez**
- **Tammy Lee, Portland State University**

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY LEADERSHIP / STAFF / PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT

Nicole Buchanan, Tim Lynch, Sara Mihm, Monique Smiley, Silvia Tanner, John Wasiutynski (Office of Sustainability), Multnomah County Commissioner Brim Edwards, Michelle Rogelstad (Commissioner Brim-Edwards office)

## ACTION ITEMS

- Ensure all items are cited within the annual letter.
- Schedule a 10-15 minute meeting for ACSI members to vote on the annual letter.

## DECISIONS MADE

- None.

## WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS

- Amanda Zuniga, she/her, ETO program development
- Jona Davis, she/her, chair of Portland NAACP Environmental Justice and Climate

committee. Interim executive director of NE Coalition of Neighborhoods. Build Shift collective.

- Mara Gross
- Noelle Studer-Spevak, she/they, Families for Climate, Corbett Grange member
- Silvia Tanner, she/her, Office of Sustainability, energy policy
- Derron Coles, he/him, DRC Learning Solutions, consultant with Blueprint Foundation
- John Wasiutynski, he/him, Director of Office of Sustainability
- Elaine Hart, she/they, SW Portland, consulting on clean energy policy and planning
- Tammy Lee, transportation research and education center at PSU
- Samantha Hernandez, she/her, Oregon Physicians Social Responsibility
- Michelle Rogelstad, policy/budget director for Commissioner Brim-Edwards
- Juliae Riva, she/her, Portland General Electric for transportation electric managing grants and long term engagement with underserved communities. On OEC Emerging Leaders Board.
- Tim Lynch, he/him, Senior Policy Analyst at Office of Sustainability
- Monique Smiley, she/her, Sustainability Engagement Specialist with Office of Sustainability,
- Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards
- Nicole Buchanan, she/her, Office of Sustainability

## INTRO & PRIORITIES FOR COMMISSION BRIM EDWARDS

- **Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards** welcomed **ACSI members**. Desires to effectively support and advance ACSI priorities and wants to help get interests in front of other Multnomah County Commissioners. She's interested in sustainability, climate justice, and interested in how the County can align against and with the new form of government in Portland. Concerned with the new form of government, and how joint projects and initiatives will change with new leadership and staff.
- **John Wasiutynski** shared the history of the joint sustainability committee between the City of Portland and Multnomah County, and how it led to the formation of ACSI and the City's own sustainability and planning committee. He also discussed how the [Climate Justice framework](#) as well as other collaborations, and distinct roles and strengths of each agency, are helping to move local priorities forward.
- **Commissioner Brim-Edwards** desires clear, collaborative action on climate.
- **Jona Davis** shared that she's encouraged by the work done at the Office of Sustainability, particularly the Build Shift Collective with City of Portland, where city and county staff, as well as community folks, who help to encourage and push collaboration.
- **Amanda Zuniga** said that she appreciates the County's emphasis on health, and encourages using this lens, and the Climate Justice framework into conversations with ACSI subcommittees and in collaborations. Commissioner Brim-Edwards spoke to how we can use data to effectively change policy impacting health outcomes, particularly when it's not just the County's jurisdiction.
- **Noelle Studer-Spevak** shared that she's concerned about a lack of information for the public. No public facing website with all the programs available to low and moderate income to people in the area. She's also part of Electrify PDX, and submitted a grant application to PCEF for a dashboard where people can do tree plantings, install a heat pump. She'd like to see leveraging social relationships and getting information directly to people, and would like to see more events like [East County Learn Share Do Fair](#) to

- get resources to people.
- In the chat, these relevant links were shared:
    - [Environmental justice zine](#)
    - [Environmental justice indicators report](#)
  - **Derron Coles** shared how the Gresham coalition is working on the [Change Is In the Air](#) health data and shift to the other platform that demystifies the sources.
  - In closing, **Commissioner Brim-Edwards** said that she looks forward to the annual letter. For upcoming work, she encouraged **ACSI members** to think of ways that she can get ACSI's work to the Commissioner level, at the dias.

## REVIEW & APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

- **ACSI members** present approved the meeting minutes from 10/11/23 with no corrections. **Noelle Studer-Spevak** and **Elaine Hart** abstained to vote due to not being present at that meeting.

## ANNUAL LETTER

- **John Wasiutynski** shared the context of how the annual letter has and can be used to the benefit of ACSI.
- **ACSI members** joined breakout rooms based on subcommittees to discuss edits to the draft of the annual letter.
  - **ACQE breakout:**
    - Want to see a sentence on low-income customers and energy poverty in the energy section.
    - Rephrased some of the air quality data collection section. Decided to name Change is in the Air, an ongoing effort by change is in the air.

**Continue advocating for an energy transition that centers the resiliency and wellbeing of environmental justice communities.**

Multnomah County should continue to utilize its advocacy on investments that increase energy systems reliability and resilience, as well as community health and resilience, with a focus on vulnerable communities. The January 2024 winter storm is a reminder of the importance of focusing not only on utility infrastructure but also on programs and policies that ensure that people have access to, and can afford, energy during severe weather events.

Multnomah County should similarly continue advocating to utilities and their regulators for actions that are consistent with the County's just energy transition goals, centering and energy justice in that advocacy. It is especially important that Multnomah County focus its attention on energy poverty, an issue that impacts close to a quarter of community members and that could be exacerbated by increasing rates and increasing need for energy. ~~Mention energy poverty in this section - see RMI article/MultCo energy burden figures~~

**Air Quality**

**Support efforts to create community-owned dashboard on local air quality**

We encourage the Commissioners to continue efforts to ensure healthy air quality for County residents, as well as related long-term climate benefits. We suggest a continued focus on improving indoor air quality, an issue that continues to be understudied and under-regulated at the state and community level. **Multnomah County should support and, where possible, partner with in-Change is in the Air Program (CAP) and other current and future efforts to collect -seek funding for community-based data collection on indoor and outdoor air quality.** These efforts can lead to a community-owned dashboard that provides local, reliable data to inform community and individual action. This data dashboard could support regional efforts to reduce pollutants by providing baseline data and longitudinal data for impact

**Food & Water:** Nicole Buchanan reported the following changes, in red.

Rights of nature means legal recognition that nature is a living entity with rights. These rights reflect the growing recognition that our current legal frameworks are unable to successfully protect and reverse harm to nature because our current system sees nature only as a set of resources to use and exploit.

Over three dozen communities in the US have passed laws protecting the rights of nature; multiple Tribal Nations have passed laws and policies; and five countries on three continents have passed national laws. These rights have protected ecosystems and species, including Indigenous first foods, safety from toxic waste, and the right of rivers to flow.

ACSI recommends that the County create a committee tasked with developing a strategy to develop a rights of nature ordinance in Multnomah County. The committee should develop a report describing how rights of nature might apply to waterways and other natural resources, and should outline a process to advance the policy development, including a community engagement plan.

The process could be modeled after the renaming of the Wapato bridge, and should include coordination with Tribal governments to the extent they want to participate.

We as an advisory council would like to open up the dialog to step forward as a county as leaders in the nation that offer protection to the environment. With past examples of actions that would be unimaginable under such protections, like pollution of Portland Harbor Superfund Site or blocking of fish passages in various rivers and streams of the area, it is time to make major changes in the way we think of nature, as more than just a resource to be extracted from or manipulated for capital gain.

**Transportation:**

Change language to not be as rhetorical and give better connections centered to the County's areas of influence. Talked about building the transportation system of "tomorrow."

- Next steps: AQCNE language will be finalized at the subcommittee meeting next week (March 6 at 2:00 via zoom)
- **Final Vote: ACSI Members** and staff discussed needing a quorum to approve the letter. A 10-15 minute meeting would be called so that members present could vote on the letter in full.
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## OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY UPDATES

- **John Wasiutynski** shared a shoutout for **Monique Smiley** for her work spearheading the Black History and Futures Month proclamation. ([link](#)) He also gave a shout out to **Nicole Buchanan** for her leading work on a \$2 million grant for a Department of Energy grant to allow us to address non-energy barriers to home weatherization and to do deep decarbonization with households that we serve. He discussed the many grants are available, including PCEF. Community Change grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- OHA is launching Healthy Homes grants so we partnered with our Health and Weatherization team on scope of work. Plan to apply. People should reach out if they want more information.
- A lot of political transitions happening at the County, primaries will be in May, impacts ACSI and who we work with.
- March 16th tree planting event, all are welcome, memorial for the lives lost during the 2021 heat dome. ([link](#)) Will be staging at Nadaka nature park.
- Wednesday March 6th, Portland City Council will take up ordinance to phase out the use of gas powered leaf blowers. Partnership with Multnomah County on implementation. Starting 2026, most of the year prohibition, then phase in of year round prohibition. County will help with grants for small businesses to transition.
- **Silvia** - 2021 OR Legislation passed HB 2021, allowed the PUC to consider energy burden through rates and programs. Interim programs are in place, 15 - 60% discount for LI customers. Getting ready for the second phase of that implementation, focused on the discount programs.
- **Amanda** - Noted recent media that there are 85,000 more customers who are eligible for LI bill discount programs. Asked to help spread the word. Energy Trust is engaged.
- **Silvia** - Part of a cohort of CBO led effort, bringing together 20 grassroots orgs to connect policy/program making with people who have lived experience with issues like energy burden.

- **John** - DEQ will be taking up expansion of vehicle inspection program to include medium duty diesel equipment.

#### NEXT STEPS & FOLLOW UP

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